

Southwest Washington Health District – Clark County Transition **Transition Communications Plan**

Situation

Effective Jan 2003, Clark County will provide the public-health services for its residents that are currently provided by the Southwest Washington Health District. Skamania County will do the same, whether by forming its own structure, contracting with Clark County or joining Klickitat County.

Between February 2002 and January 2003, decisions will be made directly affecting some members of the public and the staff of Clark County and the health district. Many more people – even those who at most may be affected indirectly – have an interest in the issue.

Goals

- Expand credibility in the reorganization process.
- Elicit candid questions, comments, and ideas to advance the reorganization.
- Serve as conduit for dispersing questions, comments and information to the appropriate people.
- Support efforts that encourage health district and Clark County employees to take actions required for reorganization.
- Guide constituents on accessing public-health services through and after reorganization.
- Increase accurate information-sharing.
- Ensure interested members of the public have access to accurate information.
- Speak with one voice regarding reorganization process.

Audiences

- Health district board.
- Health district staff.
- Health district clients.
- Health district community partners.
- Health district vendors.
- Clark County commissioners
- Clark County staff.
- State Board of Health.
- State Health Department.
- Municipal leaders in Clark and Skamania counties.
- Legislators.
- Community leaders.

Strategies

- Create transparent flow of information from transition team to staff.
- Coordinate and develop materials related to the transition, orientation, etc., for health district and county staff.
- Provide opportunities for staff, community partners and local leaders to raise questions and contribute ideas on the reorganization.

- Teach public-health staff about Clark County structure, including its programs, services and people.
- Teach Clark County staff about public health.
- Build consistency in communication materials.
- Update external audiences on reorganization milestones.
- Position resultant changes as positive, progressive and seamless.

Tools and activities

Key to timeline: I – Immediate, O – Ongoing, AKD - After key decisions are made.

Health District staff

- A. Devote biweekly *Transition Times* solely to answering questions posed by district staff, teaching them Clark County's structure and showcasing resources. *I, O*
- B. Forward weekly *FYI* online newsletter to staff. *I, O*
- C. Provide regularly updated FAQ sheet to staff. *I, O*
- D. Convert staff feedback boxes at health district to repositories for reorganization questions and ideas, forwarding weekly to Kay Koontz for transition team. *I, O*
- E. Letter to staff from Clark County on importance of public health and their joining the Clark County organization, the county's work to learn more about public-health services, the effort to keep staff informed as timely as possible. *I*
- F. Establish a spot on the Web site (ideally the Intranet) for all related information, providing a historical record. *I*
- G. Provide Intranet link to Clark County's Web page on reorganization. *I*
- H. Provide staff with the opportunity to view *Clark County Focus* and *Clark County Close-Up*. (If technology isn't available, let them know when these programs are scheduled and/or how to obtain tape from CVTV.) *I, O*
- I. Provide copy of all reorganization-related news disseminated broadly to county staff or broad public audiences (e.g., leader letters, news releases). *O*
- J. Distribute health district 2001 annual report to staff and board of health. *April 2002*
- K. Schedule brown-bag question-answer session featuring new speaker each month, whether Kay Koontz, Bill Barron or Clark County department heads. (Let county staff know date/time/place in case they'd like to attend.) *I, O*
- L. Conduct social event in relevant county departments that allow appropriate health district and county staff to meet each other. *AKD*
- M. Coordinate "exchange" program, allowing appropriate health district staff to spend time with relevant Clark County units. *AKD*
- N. Invite health district staff to Clark County employee picnic and other county events. *June 2002*
- O. Hold "Welcome to Clark County" event with something symbolic that marks the change *Jan 2003*
- P. Hold and publicize "success ceremony" to thank health district and Clark County staff for reorganization achievements. Invitees comprise all audiences. *Feb 2003*

Clark County staff

- A. Include monthly articles on reorganization in *FYI*. *I, O*
- B. Include twice-monthly articles in *FYI* on public-health services. *I, O*
- C. Provide biweekly *Transition Times* to staff. *I, O*
- D. Provide copy of all reorganization-related news disseminated broadly (e.g., leader letters, news releases). *O*

- E. Provide regularly updated FAQ sheet to key staff, in FYI and on Intranet. *I, O*
- F. Establish e-mail box for questions related to health district transition. *I*
- G. Establish a spot on the Web site (ideally the Intranet) for all related information, providing a historical record. *I*
- H. Provide Intranet link to health district's Web site. *I*
- I. Distribute health district 2001 annual report to staff. *April 2002*
- J. Schedule all-staff brown bags on key decisions (Let HD staff know date/time/place in case they'd like to attend.). *AKD*
- K. Schedule departmental brown-bags on direct effects of the reorganization. *AKD J*
- L. Conduct social event in departments that will include appropriate health district staff so that staff can meet each other. *AKD*
- M. Letter to all staff, reiterating value of public-health services and requesting special effort to welcome public-health colleagues. *Dec. 2002*
- N. Hold and publicize "success ceremony" to thank health district and Clark County staff for reorganization achievements. Invitees comprise all audiences. *Feb 2003*

External audiences

- A. Disseminate news releases and meet with local reporters at time of key reorganization milestones. *O*
- B. Send health district's 2001 annual report to local vendors, select media and community partners. *April 2002*
- C. Distribute information to health district clients, explaining reorganization's seamless impact and providing contact information. *I*
- D. Post reorganization facts onto health district and Clark County Web home pages, with link to FAQ pages for more information. *O*
- E. Schedule key transition team members into respective city councils' public-meeting agendas to provide highlights and answer questions, alerting legislators of the dates. *AKD*
- F. Schedule health district and Clark County staff for presentations to Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance and Neighborhood Advisory Committee of Clark County. *AKD*
- G. Schedule opportunity for health district's community partners to meet key members of transition team. *AKD*
- H. Send letter to health district vendors explaining reorganization and key decisions, soliciting questions and ensuring continued quality service delivery (Review in advance with county attorney). *AKD*
- I. Distribute leader letters that explain reorganization and key decisions and inviting them to share concerns or ideas. *AKD or at first reasonable opportunity*
- J. Conduct editorial visits explaining the impact of the completed reorganization. *AKD*
- K. Schedule *Clark County Close-Up* segment featuring Kay Koontz and Bill Barron to share key decisions, answer questions on the process and provide highlights of the new reorganization. *AKD*
- L. Reorganize health district Web sites into Clark County system. *4th quarter 2002, but begin discussion mid-June*
- M. Place "open letter" advertisement in each local daily and weekly paper, explaining the completed reorganization's positive impact on the community. *Jan 2003*
- N. Distribute 8-1/2-by-11-inch flier to clients, community partners and vendors announcing completed reorganization, listing key changes and providing contact information including web address for more information. *Jan 2003*
- O. Post larger version of flier within public-health offices and lobbies. *Jan 2003*

- P. Hold and publicize “success ceremony” to thank health district and Clark County staff for reorganization achievements. Invitees comprise all audiences. *Feb 2003*
- Q. Incorporate a tagline that deals with championing change as part of all health district collateral materials. *I, O*

Guidelines: review process for written materials

Note: Information that is strictly procedural in nature (e.g., meeting notices) is not subject to these guidelines.

Health district-generated materials

- Clark County (Lianne Forney) approval (*1 working day turnaround*) for all materials disseminated to or for public (e.g., news releases, publications, letters to general mailing list or to specific external audiences such as clients, elected officials, community partners)
- Clark County review and comment (*1 working day turnaround*) for all materials disseminated broadly to health district staff (e.g., biweekly internal newsletter)
- To Clark County as fyi for materials that have been sent to health district divisions or units that characterize or describe aspects of transition and merger (e.g., transition team notes, materials from division managers to their staff)

Clark County-generated materials

- Health district (Kay Koontz) review and comment (*1 working day turnaround*) for all materials disseminated to or for public (*see first bullet above*)

Timeline

- March 2002 – March 2003

Evaluation

In addition to assessing the effectiveness at the end of the transition, carry out a limited number of evaluation measures that would indicate if any midcourse corrections are necessary.

- Survey public-health staff on adequacy, accuracy and candor of information shared.
- Measure volume and gauge tone of questions, comments and ideas received from staff.
- Measure staff participation with reorganization requirements.
- Solicit and analyze anecdotes from health district staff on client and community-partner ease accessing public-health services through and after reorganization.

Budget

Money and other resources to research, plan, execute and evaluate the transition communications plan extends only to the following:

- Salaries and time of communications professionals and other respective staff.
- Use of in-house copy machines, paper and other office equipment and supplies.
- Funds for print advertisement in select local newspapers.

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